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Introduction:

Food safety in Missouri is a huge responsibility. Given that millions of meals are consumed daily in the state and the complex and changing food industry, it is no wonder the bulk of efforts of a typical local public health environmental program center on food safety. Our efforts should be focused in two directions, education and regulation of the food industry and education of consumers.

While the focus of this chapter is on food, some of the authority and activities discussed will also apply to drugs and cosmetics.

Structure:

Food safety activities are conducted by a wide array of governmental entities in the state. These are outlined below:

Federal

FDA – United States Food and Drug Administration

- Has responsibility for regulating imported food
- Has authority of all food in interstate commerce (moving between states)
- Has staff located in the state that inspect food processing facilities
- Provides technical assistance and support to state food safety programs
- May conduct surveys and evaluations of state food safety programs
- Provides funding in support of State food safety programs
- Provides oversight of the Conference for Food Protection who recommend changes to the FDA food code

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

- Regulates the sale of meat and poultry products in interstate commerce
- Regulates meat production facilities

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Coordinates and assists with multistate foodborne disease investigations
- Compiles and analyses foodborne disease data
- Makes recommendations to prevent foodborne disease based on data analysis

State

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DHSS – Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

BERL – Bureau of Environmental Regulation and Licensure

- Has authority to regulate food produced or sold in the state
- In conjunctions with local public health agencies (LPHAs), conducts enforcement activities in counties without food ordinances
- Provides technical assistance and support to LPHAs
- Assists LPHAs with food safety activities after a major disaster
- Develops food safety policies and standards, including the food code and EHOG
- Has staff who routinely inspect food processing facilities
- Provides food safety training to LPHAs, the industry and the public
- Conducts surveys of LPHAs food safety programs
- Provides funding in support of LPHA environmental health programs

BCDCP – Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention

- Assists LPHAs with foodborne disease investigations
- Compiles data about foodborne disease occurrence

State Public Health Laboratory

- Conducts analysis of food samples
- Provides technical assistance regarding food sampling

MOAG – Missouri Department of Agriculture

Meat Inspection Program

- Conducts inspections and license firms processing meat distributed within Missouri

Egg Licensure Program

- Licenses egg producers who sell eggs (exemption for farm sales)

Local

LPHA's – Local Public Health Agencies (cities and counties)

EPHS – Environmental Public Health Specialist

- Develops a work plan for food establishments and food processors establishing inspection frequency and criteria for reinspections, must meet EHOG minimums
- Conducts inspections of food establishments according to plan

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- Conducts inspections of temporary food establishments according to agency policies
- Conducts appropriate follow up of complaints against food establishments
- Assures food safety after disasters
- Performs enforcement activities according to local ordinance or section 3.2 enforcement guidelines
- Collects food samples
- Conducts food safety training for the industry and the public

Communicable Disease Staff

- Conducts investigations of foodborne outbreaks

Authority:

It is vitally important that all staff involved in the regulation of food be intimately familiar with where their authority comes from and with the contents of the authorizing documents. In Missouri, authority for the regulation of food is derived from local ordinances and state laws and regulations.

Ordinances

Many cities and counties have adopted food protection ordinances for their jurisdictions. This allows the local agency to become somewhat autonomous from the state. They develop and use their own inspection and other forms and conduct the enforcement procedures of the ordinance themselves. DHSS regional and program staff are still available to provide technical assistance and consultation to agencies with ordinances. DHSS may, at the request of the county, conduct surveys of ordinance counties food safety programs. Jurisdictions with food protection ordinances and core public health contracts with the state are expected to manage their programs to be in compliance with both. For example, a local ordinance could state that inspections must be done at least once per year. The core contract dictates inspections be completed according to risk priority with high risk establishments inspected more frequently than medium risk establishments and medium risk establishments more frequently than low risk. By inspecting high risk establishments every 6 months, medium risk establishments every 9 months and low risk establishment every 12 months the program would be in compliance with both their ordinance and the requirements of the core public health contract.

State Authority

In areas of the state without local food protection ordinances, responsibility for food safety lies with DHSS. DHSS fulfills this obligation by contracting with LPHAs to conduct environmental

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health programs including food safety. Food safety programs in these jurisdictions must be conducted to the standards outlined in this EHOG, and DHSS may audit programs in these jurisdictions without invitation. Authority for the program is derived from the following laws and regulations:

Statute 196.010 to 196.271, RSMo
Regulation 19 CSR 20-1.040 and 19 CSR 20-1.025 (food code)

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